

or in praise of ronald reagan  
or jerry falwell or anita bryant  
or someone like that,

now that would take a little courage.

but it won't be me for two reasons:

(1) i can't find much of a defense  
for the above, and

(2) the people i'd be offending would know  
i was just trying to offend them.

#### WHAT WE TALK ABOUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT LITERATURE

she asks me, "what does one say  
about proust?"

i tell her, "one says that the difficulties  
in reading him result from his coming  
at the tail-end of the ciceronian-miltonic  
rhetoric of amplification — the periodic  
sentence and the homeric simile — compounded  
by his connections with the symbolist-modernist  
logic of synaesthesia and associational recollection."

she says, "if i memorize that  
will it get me a ph.d.?"

"no," i tell her, "but it will sure shut up  
a lot of people at your next cocktail party."

#### PIGEONHOLED

"you're not a catholic anymore, are you?"  
she asks.

"yes," i say, "i have the indelible sacramental  
marks of baptism, confirmation, and matrimony  
on my soul. in fact, i did the matrimony bit  
three times, but only the first one makes  
the mark."

"still, you don't go to church anymore, do you?"

"no," i say, "i don't go to church anymore."

"i know what you are," she exults,  
"you're an existentialist!"



"you read that article that said i was."

"yes," she says, "but i would have spotted it anyhow."

"okay," i say, "i'm probably closest to the sartre of 'existentialism is a humanism' but i think i put more weight on deterministic factors than he did. also, he was an atheist, whereas, for all i know, there may even be a god."

"a god?" she says.

"a god," i say.

"would you then," she nods, "call yourself an agnostic quasi-determinist existentialist?"

i need a drink. i need a drink badly, and i am going to have to leave the office to get one, so i say,

"that's it! you've got it! i'm an agnostic quasi-deterministic existentialist!"

she brightens and leaves. i lock up the office. i may be agnostic about a lot of things, but i know i have earned a drink.

#### FIFTY MILLION AMERICANS CAN BE WRONG

bobby mc ferrin is a multi-talented singer.  
i even bought my little boy  
his wyndham hills recording  
of "the elephant's child,"  
with narration by jack nicholson.  
bobby mc ferrin does all these  
incredible animal noises on it.

so why is it that  
whenever i hear bobby mc ferrin's  
spectacularly successful and pre-eminently  
lovable rendition of "DON'T WORRY;  
BE HAPPY," i want to hit him in the teeth.

— Gerald Locklin

Long Beach CA